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$100 Prize Story.

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The Black Cat

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A Daughter of the Sun.*

BY SAMUEL SCOVILLE, JR.

IN the east appears a copper-colored streak, brightening through tawny reds to a flame-colored glow. A moment of waiting, with the steely sky all tense, and then dawn flashes and Post Desert awakes.

The southernmost of all the Arizona posts, with the scorching sands of the desert licking its adobe wall, it stands in the heart of the Apache country. Through the dew-drenched sage bush sleepy troopers stumble this morning, cinching up whinneying broncos, who when mounted buck vigorously, as a protest against such early rising.

For last night two scouts, their weary horses white with lather, pounded at the gates. From General Crook, the guardian of all that waste land, they came. Lone Wolf, after a year of quiet preparation, is once more on the warpath with his band of Apaches. Leaving a trail of blood and ashes, they are sweeping southward to the desert, where, among the rocks and cañons, they can evade all pursuit, if only Crook's little army can be passed or broken through.

* This story received a prize of $100 in THE BLACK CAT competition that closed March 31, 1898.

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So messengers have hurried to every post, summoning every man able to back a horse. Even if the Reds break through, the General counts on a pursuit too close to permit them time to attack the almost deserted posts.

At Post Desert the grizzled old Colonel has decided to leave behind the two scouts, to rest from their hard ride. They will be also the sole protectors of the women and children of the little garrison, for none others are left but Joe, the cook, too valuable to be lightly risked in a skirmish, and two troopers in the hospital. But from the Black Hills to the Gila River there are no more noted Indian fighters than these two scouts, the Wells brothers. The Indians themselves have nicknamed one "Death" from his infallible aim, while the other is called "Dumb," because for years no one, save possibly his brother, has heard him speak.

As the men file out in the red dawn of this blazing August day, there canters out to see them depart a girl of eighteen, with a skin as brown as her tan gauntlets, and gray eyes that look out from under long, black lashes — strange eyes that can darken to match the great coil of dusky hair or brighten like the glint on steel — eyes that can do anything but flinch or waver. The truest, dearest eyes in the world, thinks Lieutenant Ardsley of the Signal Corps, as Alice Claverack gallops up to say good-by to her uncle, the Colonel.

Her horse, Night, is worthy of the rider. Without a single white hair his magnificent quarters and satiny skin, so thin that all the tracery of veins beneath shows through, mark him as a thoroughbred. At sight of the long line of sulky little broncos with their jingling accoutrements, Night stands on his hind legs and gives Alice an opportunity to display equitation that an admiring troop will swear to be unequalled on the plains. In a minute she has brought Night down on his feet again, a bunch of trinkets tinkling against the silver-backed hand-mirror hanging at her belt, and deftly reins him alongside the Colonel.

As the bluff soldier tries to make his parting words as light and reassuring as possible, he notes with disapproval the glance of understanding passing between his lovely niece and the young and ineligible lieutenant who, he suddenly remembers, has been monopolizing Alice's society the past month.

Soon the rapid, even lope of the tireless broncos carries the troopers of the 7th Cavalry beyond the range of vision of the anxious eyes at Post Desert strained to catch a last glimpse of the dust cloud marking their way as it disappears in the lonely north, but long after they are out of sight of the post the worthy Colonel is puzzled by flashes of light on the sky coming from that direction, and glances sternly at Lieutenant Ardsley, who only regards the sky-line where the flashes come with a curiously tender look in his eyes.

But the departure of the troop is eagerly watched by other eyes than those of the little garrison — black, snaky eyes — that glitter low in the sage bush as the soldiers pass, and flash with anticipation at sight of the deserted post. For once Lone Wolf has outwitted the Gray Fox, as the Indians call General Crook. The Wolf himself, with a picked force of braves on foot, has slipped through the slim, shifting line of blue horsemen. This has been easy, for the scouts naturally follow the plain horse-sign. Once in the passes of the southern hills, he can be joined later by the squaws and horses. Meantime, the Wolf reasons, because of a curious weakness of the whites, the women and old men will be well fed and cared for, instead of being tortured to death, as captives properly should be. So for three days this picked band of fighters has traveled hot-foot southward, and now, by a lucky chance, the last post of the enemy lies before them, almost defenceless.

The hot hours wear away, until the troop is safe beyond signal, and nearer and nearer to the chaparral hedge crawl the Wolf and his pack. If the defence of the Post devolve upon the cook, smoking before the kitchen, or the convalescing troopers, lying in cots in the cool verandah, another surprise and massacre will be added to the Wolf's long list.

But when a scout's life has long depended upon his eyesight, it becomes very keen. The sage bush moves ever so slightly out beyond the hedge — and there is no wind.

"It mought be a jack-rabbit," mutters Death, "but — " and the noontide stillness is broken by a rifle shot. Almost as if part of the report comes a sudden, hideous, wailing cry — the death-note of the Apache. A pulse of silence, and then one horrid tumult of

yells, as the van of the ambushed reds rushes upon the Post, hoping to carry it with one fierce attack.

On come the naked, painted forms over the hot sand, each savage swinging in front of him a long blanket, which serves both as a shield and as a foothold when the bristling thorns of the hedge are reached. The great outer gates, fortunately, have been shut and barred on the departure of the troopers. A scattering fire is kept up by the Indians who, with the Wolf, cover the attack, but not a shot comes from the low loop-holed wall surrounding the tiny green and the fort itself. Death and Dumb are Indian fighters too old to waste ammunition against swinging blankets. Crouched close to the circular wall they wait. Now the Indians are at the hedge. Even as their hands clutch at the top, and a dozen befeathered heads show over the wall, fire spurts from two of the loop-holes and in an instant the heads disappear. Each scout carries six lives in the magazine of his Winchester, and as fast as practised hands can pump the levers their shots pour out at a short fifty yards range. Well, indeed, do Death and Dumb sustain their reputation for marksmanship and the rush is stopped without a red man over the outer wall.

Now all trace of the Indians disappears. For a space a pandemonium of shouts, yells and rapid shots. Now, in an instant, the silence of the desert. With great good sense the Wolf simply waits. Once let it become dark enough to dim the aim of the scouts, and his band can swarm over the wall and butcher the little garrison by sheer force of numbers. Not a sign of the tawny bodies can be seen, but let one of the garrison be exposed ever so little and there comes a puff of white smoke and the whine of a bullet from the sage bush.

The weary day slowly passes. Early in the afternoon, after Joe has crawled out with food and water for the silent sentinels, Death feels a light touch on the shoulder and finds Alice crouched beside him. She has been doing valorous work inside with the dozen frightened women and children, trying to overcome by activity the dread she will not confess to her less philosophical companions, until a plan has formed itself in her mind — a desperate plan — but not less desperate than their situation. Ignoring the scout's reproof she interrupts quietly:

"Death, what are we going to do after sundown?"

There is silence as the scout looks at her searchingly, but the gray eyes meet his unflinchingly and the set little mouth never quivers. "Tell me, Death," she repeats simply.

The scout answers with strained and shaking voice: "If help doesn't come before dark — and I don't see where help can come from — they'll rush us — and then it's only a matter of minutes."

"I thought so," said Alice, after a little pause. "Now listen to my plan," and she murmurs a while into the ear of the scout.

"Couldn't be did," answers the scout laconically, with a shake of the head, "they'd fill ye full of lead at the gate. Besides, it's a man's job, not a girl's."

"It's for me to go," replies Alice, "I'm the only one here can do it, and I'm the only one who can ride Night, and he's the only horse that can do his part. You and Dumb pretend to be opening the gate, and draw their attention, and I'll jump the wall on the other side."

"Jump that six-foot hedge and wall?" exclaims Death, aghast. "No horse on the plains could do it."

"None but Night," calmly corrects Alice. "He'll take anything I send him at. And you know — it's our only chance."

Death wavers, and then calls his brother crawling toward him by a low whistle. In a few short sentences Alice's plan is unfolded to him.

Dumb thinks intently for a few moments, with no trace of expression on his impassive face.

"As she says," whispers Death, "it's a last chance. She'd better be shot down in the open than be here after sundown."

Suddenly Dumb reaches out and for a moment engulfs Alice's little brown hands in one of his big, lithe paws, and then begins to crawl toward the gates, followed by his brother, while Alice makes her way back to the buildings in safety.

During all the tumult of the attack Night has been grazing peacefully within the enclosure — the only horse of the garrison allowed such a privilege. At a low call from Alice he trots to the doorway and is saddled and bridled by her deft fingers. Meantime, the scouts have reached the gate, where through the heavy bars they are but indistinctly visible to the lurking Indians.

Death places his slouch hat on the muzzle of his rifle and moves it to and fro, while from the opposite side of the gate Dumb clinks the bar and lock vigorously with a steel cleaning rod. It suffices, and bullet after bullet harmlessly splinters the bars. The venomous little puffs of smoke begin to cluster nearer together, as the besiegers crawl from ambush on all sides to stop the escape of any messenger from the gate.

They quickly cease firing as they behold a girl, mounted on a magnificent black horse, come thundering down toward them. Horses and squaws are too valuable booty to be shot at. The scouts ostensibly redouble their efforts to open the gate in time, while the band outside waits expectantly for the horse and rider coming straight toward their itching hands.

A few rods from the gate Alice presses her right rein tightly against Night's satin neck. Almost in mid-air, with a tremendous swing that would have unseated many a rider, he swerves, turns almost in his tracks, and goes dashing back. A derisive yell comes from the sage bush as the messenger apparently abandons her purpose and seeks safety in the fort.

Back rushes Night, gathering speed with every stride, and before the Indians have realized the daring plan the two have passed the fort and are flying across the hundred yards of level turf toward the six feet of adobe wall, surrounded by a wide mass of chaparral thorns, that bars the way. To the hidden watchers without, and even to the garrison, who know horse and rider well, the jump seems impossible.

But Night is of a different stock from the horses known to the plains. The blood of a long line of thoroughbreds is in him—game timber-toppers, who would try a house if sent at it. In a moment he has covered the stretch of turf until only a few yards separate him from the wall. Then, as in the glorious days when every master of the hounds knew Night, he shortens his stride, gauging the take-off with marvellous skill. For an instant he seems to crouch, and then, as Alice leans a bit forward and lifts the reins encouragingly, he leaves the ground with a tremendous spring that carries him up, and up, until the sinewy neck and bent forelegs are above the wall. Even as he hangs over it, with that strange, inexplicable double leap of which only a thoroughbred

knows the secret, the tense body shoots itself forward as if from some invisible leverage — beyond the wall, beyond the waiting thorns — and the great horse lands lightly, with hardly a stagger, on the sand. The best of steeple-chasers could not have done better than that slim girl with burning eyes who, with shifting balance and skilful hand, has helped Night in his magnificent effort.

From the plain comes a fierce yell as Lone Wolf and his hungry pack see themselves tricked and one of their prey escaping toward the almost unguarded south. Almost unguarded — but not quite — for as Night heads toward the heights there comes from a near clump of bushes a single low-toned note, like the open A string of a banjo. Through the hot air behind her sounds the long, hissing whisper of an arrow, a sickening pain bites at her shoulder, and Alice feels something wet and warm trickling down over the hand that tightly grasps the little mirror at her belt.

For a moment the anxious watchers see her reel in the saddle, and the rein falls loose upon Night's neck. But only for a moment. The thought that she carries the last hope of the garrison drives back the cloud from her eyes and the numbness stealing to her brain. Almost in a moment she is out of arrow-range, and, running as he never ran before, the brave horse reaches the beginning of the long slope that stretches up some six thousand feet, to where Lone Bluff towers blackly. Swifter and swifter they go, directly opposite to the route taken by the troopers of the 7th, the only possible saviors of the practically defenceless Post! There is no pursuit. Time enough, thinks the Wolf, after the fort be sacked, to track down the black-haired squaw and high-jumping horse. From the fort Alice soon shows only as a moving, climbing speck, that merges at last into the drab of the hillside.

The long, hot afternoon drags wearily, yet only too soon will come the night, and with it annihilation. The sharp eyes at Post Desert vigilantly watch the ambushed foe at the gates and then gaze, long and anxiously, at the lone bluff to the south. There! At the very top of the height, comes an irregular series of flashes, like sunlight reflected from a mirror. It is she, the courageous girl on whom all remaining hope depends. Again and again the

dots and dashes of light flash across the heavens, and earnestly all hearts pray that, far across the blazing sands, some one in that shifting line of horsemen thirty miles away may spell on the sky line that cry for help.

Slowly through the flawless blue sinks the sun, and the signals never cease. Slowly, slowly through the fading turquoise it descends, until but a narrow strip remains between the dazzling orb and the gray of the desert.

Now approaches the brief twilight, and destruction is creeping nearer with the dark. The little garrison knows it — the sobbing children and the crouching, shuddering, praying women — the two grim scouts, who have fought a hopeless fight and in their dumb despair can think now only of the last terrible duty of quick death they owe to the helpless ones behind them. Far away on the height the lonely girl knows it, and with the very last rays of the setting sun her glass flashes against the northern sky the single word, "Help!" "Help!" and again, "Help!"

. . . . . .

Now from the sage bush rises the most horrid of human cries, a wail swelling to a shriek, like the unearthly scream of a wounded horse, yet with a leer of triumph and anticipation running through it — the hag cry of the Apache squaws as they wait for their share of the torturing. Lone Wolf and his band know well what the darkness means for them. Tauntingly again they raise the wail, and the scouts grit their teeth at this last terrible insult. Not for them the war-cry, the shout of fighting men, but the women cry, that only bound captives should hear.

Inch by inch the strip of blue melts before the sinking sun, and the lurking foe creeps nearer with the shadows. Suddenly Dumb, who has been crouching impassively close to the wall, raises his head and throws back his long hair with a listening gesture. Then a great voice, that none there save Death has ever heard, rings out, thrilled with a joy that even the Apaches can understand:

"The bugles, the bugles of the 7th, O God!" and the strange, unknown voice breaks in a sob.

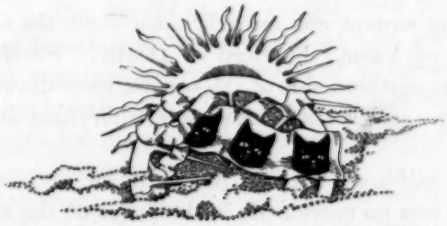
And now all hear it, silvery sharp in the silence that follows the sentinel's shout. Ah, never, never on earth will there be a

sweeter sound to any one of that garrison than the far-away bugle note that even in its distant sweetness seems to partake of the insistent stress of tumultuous hurry, of the rush of straining horses and grim-faced men.

The sound has banished all thoughts of leisurely slaughter from the minds of the savages. To gain the fastnesses of the hills is now their only purpose. But it is already too late. Louder and louder drum the hoof-beats, faster and faster whirls on that little troop of wiry, dauntless men, stripped to the waist, only the long, blue-black revolvers and the keen-edged sabres kept for the final crash, if the Lone Wolf and his band are brought to bay.

But the Apaches have no thought of standing against that avalanche. Through their fleeing, scattering remnants dash the troopers, the grim, gray Colonel at their head, and close at his shoulder the supple figure of the young lieutentant, whose flaming eyes see nothing but the dying flicker of light from the height beyond the Post, whence comes now a little love message, in a secret heliographic code he has taught the brave Alice, and which not even her uncle understands.

In the gathering darkness they find her, a slim figure with a blood-stained sleeve, leaning wearily against the faithful Night. As she sinks limply to the ground, Ardsley slips from his panting horse and gathers her in his arms, and the old Colonel looks another way, knowing well that these young people deserve their reward for their work this day.



The Shadow on the Wall.*

BY C. B. LEWIS.

THE great mutiny of the native troops in India had been crushed and only its flickering embers remained to be scattered to the winds. Savage and inhuman had been the deeds of the rebellious *Sipáhís*, and strange and cruel was the vengeance visited upon them. Even as in the beginning the peculiar beliefs of the rank and file impelled them to credit the cunningly circulated lie that the *Feringhís* were plotting, by forcing Hindu and Muhammadan to put to their lips cartridges greased with the fat of unclean animals, to deprive true believers of their caste, and therefore of honor, social position and everything worth having, so now in the end the English took advantage of the ingrained superstition of their prisoners to punish them in a manner which, the natives believed, would deprive them of their souls and render them malignant ghosts after death.

The spacious military parade ground at Kanhpúr was surrounded by a dense mass of troops and people. Twenty thousand spectators covered the ground like ants, climbed the shade trees, weighed down the house-tops and jostled each other at every window. Six thousand redcoats, in serried ranks, held two sides of a hollow square — the north and west. On the east were the spectators. On one side the square was entirely open — on the south, toward the dominions of Yama, the Lord of Death! For four hundred yards, along the northern side of the square, were drawn up twenty-four field pieces, and a little knot of artillerymen stood at every gun.

For a long half-hour the sun blazed down upon this ominous scene. There was no movement in the ranks of the military — no sound above a whisper in the compact crowd of spectators. Something more dreadful than the fear of death hung over all. It

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was a spectacle deliberately planned, one whose climax would never be forgotten — whose story would live a hundred years.

Suddenly the blare of bugles broke the silence, and a small detachment of troops came marching into the square, guarding twenty-four natives who had been condemned to death — death for treason, murder, arson, robbery — not a crime in any code of which some of them had not been guilty. Along the line of guns marched the guard, till each prisoner had been left with his back lashed to the muzzle of a loaded cannon. Not one of them had plead for mercy before the judge, not one had wept or cursed at his sentence, not one of them would die a craven's death to-day, though fully believing that spiritual as well as bodily destruction would ensue. There were grim smiles as they were bound to the guns. Heads were turned to the left to survey the mob, almost with exultation, and twisted to the right to look upon the soldiers for the last time, with contempt and hate.

If any in that vast throng had expected, when the last victim was bound to the engine of his destruction, to see the twenty-four guns discharged simultaneously, he was speedily undeceived. That would end the awful and impressive spectacle all too soon. Therefore Major Clavering had ordered the firing to begin on the right of the line, farthest from the spectators, so that, as each gun boomed out, strewing the plain with its ghastly shower, the next would be discharged nearer and yet nearer, to the shrinking, quivering, sickened but fascinated multitude. It was to be one gun every thirty seconds.

Again the bugles sounded, the drums rolled and the death warrants were read. Then the gunner on the extreme right of line stepped back, the *Sipáhí* at its muzzle held his head erect and drew a long breath, and ten seconds later he was as nothing. A shiver went through the great crowd of witnesses and every man sucked in his breath with a gasp — but no one moved or cried out. It was so with the next and the next — so until there was but one more gun and one more man to die.

Nanda Dín had not sought to escape, but not being very securely bound to the gun had pulled one arm free. Major Clavering stormed and swore at the negligent artillerymen, and as they nervously fumbled at the ropes the prisoner said to the major:

"I would not take life at your hands, if you would offer it. English swine, I hate you above all else on earth. I have killed and killed and killed. If I had a dozen lives, you could not take vengeance for all of your people I have sent to the Christian hell!"

"Stop that devil's talk," said the major, and the men tugged at the ropes.

"And you swore falsely against me in the court," continued Nanda Dín. "You charged me with many things I did not do. And now you have condemned me to be a *bhút* hereafter. Very well, you shall see what a *bhút* can do! And what I cannot do to your soul that shall my son, who lives after me, do to your body, and if not to you, then to the next of your accursed blood. I am ready!"

Hardly had the last word passed his lips when there was a jet of fire and a crash, and Nanda Dín had perished.

. . . . . .

Three years later Major Clavering was dead. No one had ambushed him — he did not die of poison — he was not struck down in the darkness as he walked a lonely road. He had been clawed to death by a tiger while on a hunting excursion two hundred miles away from his post. Only the day before Captain Clavering, his nephew and only blood relative, had been transferred from a reorganized regiment of native infantry at Allahabad to his uncle's regiment at Kanhpúr. The newcomer was a bachelor of thirty, and of course he took bachelor quarters. He brought with him his native servant, but within a month the man disappeared, never to be heard of again. Among a score of applicants for the place was a young Bengalí of twenty, Lal Rang, whom the captain disliked at first sight, and sent away with curses. Within a fortnight Clavering had given half a dozen servants a trial and kicked them out, and Lal Rang, applying again, was engaged.

Lal Rang was silent and humble in demeanor and moved about like a cat. His voice was soft and low and his tone full of respect, and any officer but Clavering would have regarded him as a prize. Not so the irascible captain. He said of the new servant, before he had had him a day:

"Gad, Major, I don't know what to make of that young nigger.

He knows his business to a dot, but I'd almost as soon have a snake moving about. It's the first time I've ever honored one of the lot with any feeling at all — good, bad, or indifferent."

"Knock him about!" recommended the major. "Now and then I get a nigger I can't make out, and I kick him around till he's as plain as A, B, C."

"A good remedy," laughed the captain, "I'll try it the first time I get an excuse!"

"Make your excuse," growled the major. "I got a sight of his face this morning, and I don't like it. He's a sulky devil, and wants a good kicking. Páthán and Sikhs — Sykeses, as Tommy Atkins calls 'em — are grateful for decent treatment, but it's thrown away on a Bengalí. He only cares for a man he's afraid of. Give him the boot, sir."

As Captain Clavering sat reading and smoking in his bungalow that evening, Lal Rang came in to ask a question about the repair of a uniform. He came gliding in like a ghost, spoke low and soft and kept his eyes cast down. His coming, his speech and his demeanor all irritated the captain. He had not taken the major seriously about the kicking, and had no thought of following the half-earnest advice given him at the mess table, but now, as the young man stood before him, he felt a surprising animosity and vindictiveness. Throwing down his book he half rose up, exclaiming:

"You cursed nigger, how dare you come skulking in on me like this?"

"The Sahib does not want a servant who clatters about like a horse," quietly replied the meek servitor.

"How do you know what I want, you son of a devil?"

Lal Rang folded his hands and bowed his head. His attitude expressed the deepest humility, and yet it increased the captain's anger. Years had passed since that tragic scene on the parade ground a quarter of a mile away. The words of the *Sipáhi* who was the last to die that day had been reported by the newspapers, and had been read by Captain Clavering at his distant post — read, sneered at, and soon forgotten.

But now, as he sat there, fiercely regarding the young native, the threat of the man about to be blown to atoms from a gun came back to him with a sudden shock. He drew in his breath with a

sound which caused Lal Rang to raise his eyes for an instant. There was one swift glance, like the thrust of a dagger, and the captain sprang to his feet and caught the servant by the throat and shook him as he hissed:

"You dog — you are the son of the fiend who was blown away that day!"

Rang made no resistance. Choked and flung about for a moment, and then backed up against the wall and released, he did not even lift a hand. Still with bowed head and folded arms he whispered:

"The Sahib is a gentleman; he is most high and sacred; it is for him to do with me as he will."

"Speak, wretch! Are you not the son of Nanda Dín?"

"I am the son of my father, Sahib."

"*Budmash!*" almost shrieked the captain, giving way to ungovernable wrath, "Instinct tells me you are my enemy. You would have cut my throat or poisoned me. I will have you hung — I will kill you with my own hands!"

His onslaught was so fierce that the hitherto passive youth now struggled for his life as the sinewy hands of Clavering closed about his slender throat and hurled him from side to side. Even this feeble resistance inflamed the rising rage of the Englishman till it burst all bounds, and seizing from a trophy of arms a native tulwár, he plunged it through the body of the boy as he crouched, panting and gasping, against the wall.

There was a court of enquiry, of course, though some of the officers considered it superfluous to make so much fuss over a "dead nigger." Lal Rang had been impudent and sullen — had even resisted and assaulted his master — and that was enough to justify Clavering. The atrocities of Nana Sahib, the memories of the well of Kanhpúr, right there in their midst, were too fresh in all minds to permit of any other result, and if the recorded verdict was not "Served him right," it meant as much.

On the night of the day on which it was rendered Captain Clavering returned at a late hour to his quarters from a mess dinner. He had not waited for the dead servant to be buried before taking on another. This new attendant should have been asleep long ago, but had not even gone to bed, and in the darkness

the captain almost fell over him, sitting on the ground before the door.

"What in the fiend's name are you asleep out here for, you cat?" exclaimed the captain, half drawing his sword.

"Come, Sahib, and see the shadow," quietly replied Gopi Mal.

"What shadow?"

"The one on the wall in your sitting-room. It came as I lighted the lamp, and it will not go away. Come!"

There was something so quietly earnest in the servant's manner that the captain followed him in a passive way into the banglá. In the middle of the largest room, about twenty feet square, a lamp stood on a small table. Over the globe was a green shade, and the light was turned down.

"See, Sahib," whispered Gopi Mal, pointing with his finger.

On the wall against which Lal Rang had crouched as the tulwár found his heart was a shadow — the shadow of Rang! It had a crouching, supplicating attitude, and the right arm was thrown up as if to shield the face from an expected blow.

"Lal Rang!" gasped the captain, sitting down heavily and glaring at the shadow.

There was silence for a moment, broken only by the heavy breathing of the officer, whose wine-muddled wits required time to grasp the situation. Then he jumped up and cried:

"Fool, why don't you turn up the light?"

The deft brown fingers sought the screw and lifted the wick.

The shadow was still there, but not as dark as before — it had more of a reddish tinge.

"Off with the shade, idiot!"

"It is off, Sahib," and the action accompanied the words.

And now they looked no longer upon a shadow — it was a blood-red silhouette upon the wall.

The wall was of light boards, tongued and grooved together and finished in oil. It filled the space between two doors, and five feet from the floor hung the trophy of native arms. It was under this that the crouching silhouette appeared in red.

Captain Clavering, as a military man, had, of course, studied optics, and he remembered that red is the complementary color of green, and his fuddled brain tried to frame a theory that the

awful aspect of the shadow was caused by the sudden removal of the green shade.

So he made Gopi Mal experiment. The servant put on and removed the shade, and carried the lamp about the room. It cast black shadows here and there, but the red silhouette remained where it first appeared.

"It is some of your native tricks," growled the captain, after a while, "some of your cursed Hindu juggling!"

"The shadow came there at dark, as I lighted the lamp," quietly replied the man. "I knew what it was at once, and I was afraid to stay inside. It is the shadow of Lal Rang — it is a shadow of blood — it is the shadow of death!"

"Nonsense!" grumbled the officer. "I've been out here long enough to know your devilish tricks. If the shadow is there to-morrow night I'll bang the wall down with your head. Help me off with these things, and then to bed with you, and if there's any gossiping about this shadow business there'll be another dead nigger to bury!"

Captain Clavering rolled into bed and was soon asleep, but Gopi Mal passed the remainder of the short night on the earth, under a tree.

"Lal Rang was murdered," he kept whispering to himself, "and his shadow has come back for revenge. He has become a *bhût*, and can come in the shape of a tiger, a wolf or a bear. He will hunt his victim down in his sleep, and sit on his breast, so he cannot give an alarm. The Sahib may do as he likes, but the shadow will not go away till he dies."

At dawn Gopi Mal disappeared, and Captain Clavering long overslept. Major Dawes, who had given such vigorous advice about Rang, fearing something was amiss, entered the banglá and aroused the sleeper.

"Has the fresh nigger bolted on you?" he queried, as the captain huddled into his uniform, fuming and cursing.

"Looks like it. The miserable idiot was in a blue funk last night over something when I got home. Let's see — what was it? Oh, an image on the wall. Frightened him out of his wits and out of the house. I'd have thumped him if I hadn't been quite so balmy."

"Always thump them, full or sober," said the major as he walked about. "What sort of an image did he see?"

"Something in there on the panel under the swords and things."

The major entered the sitting-room with his hand in his pockets, and his lips pursed into a whistle, and looked carelessly around. It had been daylight for several hours, but, all the shades being drawn, it was still like twilight in the room. His whistle suddenly ceased, and the captain heard him utter an exclamation. There was silence for half a minute, and then Major Dawes returned to the bedroom with a look of astonishment on his face and a very earnest tone in his voice as he said:

"See here, Clavering, I don't envy you that thing out there!"

"What, is it there yet?" demanded the captain, pausing in his dressing.

"Plain as the nose on your face, and I'll be hanged if it's a pleasant thing to have about the house! Why, if it isn't the shadow of the nigger you did for the other day, then my eyes are away off!"

Captain Clavering, half dressed as he was, stepped into the sitting-room with a vague sense of uneasiness. He had only a dim remembrance of the previous night's experience, but what he saw now made his heart beat faster, though his blood ran cold. There on the panel was the red silhouette of the murdered Rang, faint, yet perfect.

"What — what do you make of it?" he asked of the major, after a long stare.

"Looks tremendously like you were going to be haunted by that dead nigger!" was the blunt reply. "I've heard of such things out in this beastly country."

"I'll pull the wall down right away."

"Yes? Well, that's not a bad idea. See you later, old boy, and you can tell me how it worked."

Was Major Dawes in a hurry to leave the premises? Did he look at the captain in a strange, queer way? Clavering asked himself those questions as he hurriedly completed his toilet. He felt nervous and irritated over that shadow, and as soon as he had finished his almost solitary breakfast started to hunt up the company carpenter, to have the wall torn out.

But while framing an excuse for such an order it occurred to him that he might render himself ridiculous in the eyes of the whole post, where he was new, and without the reputation for tiger-like courage which he had at Allahabad. Let it go abroad that he was afraid of a shadow on the wall, and even the native soldiers would sneer at him. No; he would do nothing of the kind. He regretted that Major Dawes had seen the shadow, but he would laugh it off with him and stand on his dignity if any one else dared to even hint at such a thing.

Captain Clavering returned to his banglá and stood squarely before the silhouette and studied it. Then he threw open doors and windows and let in a flood of sunshine, expecting to see the last trace of it disappear. It did not disappear, though it faded a trifle. It would be almost sure to catch the eye of any caller, no matter how strong the light. The captain sat and gazed and pondered. Suddenly a feeling of relief filled his heart.

"How stupid I've been!" he laughed. "That stain has probably been there for months or years, but my superstitious nigger happened to discover it only last night. It's nothing new — it can't be new."

Clavering resumed his day's routine with a lighter heart, but a few hours later it occurred to him that it certainly was Lal Rang's shadow, and that Lal Rang had not been known about the cantonment till he first came to him, nor had the shadow been seen till after Rang was dead.

That evening at mess Major Dawes was courtesy itself, but distant. So were two or three of the others. Now and then Captain Clavering caught them looking at him in a strange way, stealing furtive glances in which pity and wonder seemed combined. When the meal was nearly at an end he secured the major's ear for a moment, and forcing a laugh, said:

"You know that shadow we saw on the wall this morning? Well, after thinking things over I concluded — "

"Excuse me, Clavering, but I haven't a moment to spare — not a second," interrupted the major, hastily withdrawing.

Captain Clavering had been sent to Coventry. There was no doubt of it in his mind. Looked upon as a man living under a curse, he was shunned by his brother-officers.

When he reached his quarters again that night it was late, not because of a wine supper now, but because he dreaded that shadow. It had been said of him in army circles and in the newspapers that he did not know the meaning of fear, yet that night he entered his banglá drawn sword in hand, and his knees knocking together as he fumbled with the lamp.

Yes, the shadow was there! Not an ordinary, black shadow — not even a faint pink silhouette — but a solid, blood-red image, sharp and life-like in its minutest outline, and looking so much like Lal Rang that a groan escaped the captain, and he felt cold, wet drops of perspiration covering his forehead and hands. And what startled him most — what clutched at his heart like the grasp of steel fingers — was the fact that the right arm, which had before covered the face as a shield, was now raised above the head in a menacing position.

"Good God, the arm has moved!" whispered the captain to himself, and his throat grew dry. "What devil's trick is this? It is the work of some conjurer, who hopes to frighten me off, but I'll beat him at his game."

Shortening his naked weapon, he advanced to the wall and jabbed a dozen times at the shadow, forcing the sword point through the boards. A live man would have been pricked, but there was no live man there in either room — only a grim, threatening shadow.

Those who had called Captain Clavering a brave man made no mistake. Had there been an atom of cowardice in his make-up he would not, as he did, have turned out the light and turned in to his camp bed. He slept fitfully, to be sure, and there were half-hours when he was much more awake than asleep, and strange, grewsome fancies flitted through his mind, but he worried through the night, and when morning came he looked no more for the shadow. He knew it was there. Neither at the mess house did he look for any cheery greeting. He was a doomed man, and others do not smile and shake hands with the shadow of death. He knew that the story of that shadow on the wall must have gone over all the cantonment, for he found officers whose acquaintance even he had not yet made looking at him askance and speaking in subdued tones.

At first, Clavering was rather glad that no one sought to draw him into conversation on a subject he would gladly avoid, but as time wore on it angered him to be ostracized, and turning to a lieutenant, he bluntly said:

"Look here, now, what in the devil is the matter with everybody? Have I become an outlaw because I killed a nigger?"

"I — I — Why, really, nothing seems to be the matter," stammered the officer addressed. "Are you feeling — er — as well as usual, Captain?"

"Of course, why shouldn't I? See any signs of cholera in my face?"

"Oh, no, no, certainly not — but you know a fellow sometimes drops off very suddenly in this country!"

"And you think I'm booked to drop off suddenly, then. That's it, is it?"

"Really now, Captain, I — I — Excuse me, but I want to speak to Flint before he goes on duty!"

Captain Clavering watched the retreating officer and half-moaned to himself:

"It's that cursed shadow on the wall! They've all heard about it, and they're afraid to strike hands with a man standing beside his own grave!"

Not being on duty that week, the captain again rode away to the city, and sauntered from place to place, having a drink here and a game of billiards there — always with a civilian — and he drank with a purpose. But when a man has the shadow of death on his wall he cannot be made drunk. No ordinary intoxicant can overcome the tension of his nervous system. He was sober when he rode away in the morning and just as sober when he returned at ten o'clock at night. He went straight to his own quarters, speaking to no one. He did not tremble this time when he lighted the lamp. His heart did not thump when he looked up and saw the shadow in its old place on the wall. He did give a start of surprise when he saw that the right hand was raised a little higher, and that the face bore a malicious look, but he had come to his quarters to go to bed — and to die! Yes, he had decided to surrender to the shadow. It would demand his life in revenge, but was life worth living, with such a thing contronting

him day and night, and his brother-officers holding themselves ready for a funeral march?

"Here I am!" he said to the shadow as he lay down for the night, "here I am, and we fight it out to-night! Either kill me or go away forever."

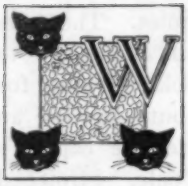
There was silence all night long in Captain Clavering's quarters. He made no effort to fight sleep away, nor to peer and listen in the velvet darkness. Dawn came, and all was quiet. The forenoon was half gone when an orderly, sent with a message to Captain Clavering, entered the banglá, after knocking vainly for admission. In a few moments he came running out, shouting an alarm, and as five or six followed him back to the captain's sleeping room they saw a sight that made them pale. Stretched out at full length upon his back was the captain, and a glance was enough to show that he was dead. Coiled up on his bosom was a hooded cobra, which hissed and threatened the intruders. When the serpent had been driven off and dispatched, Major Dawes turned to the others and said in explanation:

"He was a doomed man. There is a death shadow on his wall — the shadow of Lal Rang, the boy he killed. Come and look at it."

They went, but the shadow was no longer there!

A Bale of Rags.*

BY A. W. WHITEHOUSE.



HEN the *Duke of Athens*, one of the most wayfaring of ocean tramps, swung from Millwall Docks into the river, rounded the Forelands, kept clear of Goodwin Sands and cleverly avoided numerous other marine traps and pit. falls on the route to the little south-coast harbor of Newhaven, where she had to take on more freight, the only passenger was Charles Rolingston, who was taking out a pack of hounds to his Wyoming ranch, with a view to finding out whether the coyotes of that region could run as straight as the foxes of Northamptonshire.

But with the numerous bales of rags shipped at Newhaven came on board a mud-colored individual, in a great state of excitement, in whom Rolingston recognized an old acquaintance, Jonathan Strange, the Lewes rag merchant. Rolingston had much difficulty in preventing his hounds from being buried beneath the musty and unsavory cargo, over the stowing of which Strange was making a great fuss. He had every bale ticketed, and nothing would suit him but that they should be stowed away in numerical order, like a child in a tidy fit over his toys.

Jonathan was a many-sided personage. He owned a few racers, was a licensed pawnbroker, and, the uncharitable said, a fence. But rags were his standby. Lewes was not large enough for his operations, and he had acquired control of the output of Brighton, Eastbourne and other watering places. Though of pure Sussex stock, he was one of the few Gentiles who could patter Yiddish, his different occupations throwing him much among the users of that jargon, and his affinity for them often stood him in good stead.

He was full of narrative after the fourth gin and ginger. "Now," he said to Rolingston, "I think I can do a bit of business

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in the States. It seems that they wear their clothes so long over there, or have such poor stuff to start with, that American rags are no use for making the better kinds of paper. Now, I have fine rags, beautiful, splendid."

That Strange was greatly interested in his rags seemed evident to Rolingston, for whenever he went below to look after his hounds he always found Jonathan admiring his ill-smelling property. What with the ship smell, the kennel smell and the rag bouquet, it was no bed of roses below decks in the *Duke of Athens.*

One calm afternoon, after many days, the tramp steamed slowly into the harbor of New York, and the rancher parted from the rag merchant, not expecting to see him again, unless they should some time meet in old England.

Jonathan Strange got his rags through the customs without difficulty, and, with the assistance of a Mr. Lewis Colquhoun, at once attended to the distribution of the bales. Here it was that the utility of the numbers appeared. There are a great many varieties of rags, and the samples were carefully graded, according to the purposes for which they were to be used. The bales numbered from 100 upward were sent to various eastern points, where they arrived in safety, and drop out of this story. Bales Nos. 1 to 50, inclusive, were linen rags of a very high quality and were consigned to a paper mill in San Francisco. Of course, this shipment would not pay for freight, but if these samples gave satisfaction, Strange intended to supply the mill by the ship-load, by way of Cape Horn. Bales Nos. 51 to 100 were carted up to the warehouse of Mr. Colquhoun, where they were to serve as specimens for the New York trade. They were of all kinds — good, bad and indifferent. Colquhoun and Strange looked them rapidly over.

"No. 91, I think you said it was?" remarked Colquhoun.

"Yes," answered Strange. "Should be linen."

"Linen it is," replied Colquhoun. "Help me drag it out and open it."

This was done and the rags were spread out till it seemed as if they would cover acres. Jonathan was down on his knees among them, and Colquhoun was equally interested. They appeared to be in search of something they could not find.

Suddenly Jonathan arose from his stooping attitude and eagerly examined the number painted on the hoop of the bale.

"Good Lord!" he gasped, "we have sent 91 on to San Francisco. This is 16, as you can see by the bar underneath the 6."

The two men stared hard at each other.

"You must start West to-night," said Colquhoun, "and catch that car. East of Chicago they won't let you break the seals. After that they won't be so strict, and if it comes to the worst you must follow that bale clear up to the paper mill."

Strange reached Chicago ahead of the car of rags, but there his tribulations began. He found out that "Run along now, my good man," which is potent with an English railway "guard," does not develop any extraordinary activity in an American "conductor" — even of a freight — and that even a quarter does not, if accepted, elicit the same amount of servility as a sixpence. It was his first visit to America, and he was not enjoying himself.

As a result of his various breaks, the car eluded him at Chicago and went serenely on its western way. By dint of a good deal of activity and the assistance of an old engineer with compassion for a fellow-countryman in distress, he finally caught up with it at a little doghole of a place in Iowa.

He was boldly clambering up the side of the car, determined to effect an entrance, when he was hauled down by the coat-tails and a new obstacle presented itself in the person of a fresh freight conductor.

"Say, old feller, you can't ride in there!"

Strange, who was rapidly acquiring wisdom, said nothing, but produced a copious flask. The enemy, thus turned into an ally, took him back to the caboose and put him through a short catechism, which was repeated with variations by every subsequent conductor:

"You say the stuff in that car belongs to you. What is it?"

"Rags."

"Rags? Oh, rats! What did you want to do if you did get in?"

Here Strange explained that his rags were, or should be, very fine, handsome rags, but that one bale of much inferior stuff had been shipped by mistake, and, being a sample shipment, he wanted

to get it out before arrival, so as not to damage his future trade. This was a trifle thin, but the best he had to offer.

"Well, I can't let you in. The car is sealed and billed through. It'd cost me my job on the road."

To offer a large bribe was evidently inconsistent with his story. A small one was manifestly inadequate. So Jonathan reconciled himself to the prospect of chasing cabooses in the middle of the night, living on doughnuts and railroad-station coffee, and enduring the joys of traveling by freight all the way to San Francisco. The conductors, seeing that he was no ordinary tramp, but one provided with good cigars and a frequent and inexhaustible bottle, passed him on from one to another as a harmless crank, made mad by many rags.

Thus he worked his weary way on to the Union Pacific, through Nebraska, where he already knew his car by make and shape without looking at the number — 11038 — past Cheyenne and over Sherman Summit, till the smoke of Laramie hung far below and distant many miles, when — Smash, Smash, Bang, Brrrrrrrrrrr.

Neither more nor less than a collision with the caboose of the preceding train, which had uncoupled itself and was stranded with a broken axle. Engineer and fireman had jumped, the crew of the helpless caboose were at a safe distance, and the only person damaged, to speak of, was Strange, who was carried back to Tie Siding on a handcar, and, with serious concussion and a dislocated elbow, retired from active pursuit of his quest for the time.

But car No. 11038 had been next to the engine, and, piled on top of it, was now ablaze. Tightly-packed rags, however, are not very inflammable, and only seven bales were severely scorched. The remaining forty-three were soon put in an uninjured car and sent on to their destination.

While Strange was tossing anxiously and feverishly on his cot in a six-roomed "hotel" at Tie Siding, kindly ministered to by a stout landlady, his fellow-traveler of the *Duke of Athens* was scarcely ten miles distant down the hill, on his ranch.

Two days after the freight smash-up, there crawled into Rolingston's main yard a dilapidated team, dragging on four wheels a great mound of rubbish, upon which two men were perched. Before they had laboriously alighted Lucy Rolingston had already

christened — if that word is allowable — one of them Jerusalem, because he was old and full of sorrows, and the other Nineveh, because he was oiled and curled, with greasy black ringlets covering his ears, though he was on rather a small scale for an Assyrian bull.

There was no doubt from whence their ancestors had come. They themselves were apparently more recently from middle Europe, and their English cannot be rendered with justice to its quaintness. Nineveh did the talking, while Jerusalem gazed with wrapt and prophetic air at the ash-heap. Rolingston fancied, however, that Jerusalem was really in command.

Nineveh's enquiries began with regard to scrap-iron and broken stoves, proceeded to bottles, for which he quoted to Rolingston a market-price of three cents per dozen, and wound up with old clothing.

"Rags," quoth Nineveh, "rags ish goot. Ve tid great piz'nish mit rags at Tie Siding. Yes, sir, give us some more Tie Siding rags."

Jerusalem, at this point, cut the communication short by dropping a large piece of old iron on Nineveh's foot, and the two junk merchants piled the Rolingston's rubbish on top of their own and departed.

Not many days afterward, Rolingston was at the railway station at Tie Siding and heard of an Englishman who had been injured in a railroad accident, and had gone stark, staring mad. Of course he hunted him up, and of course it proved to be Jonathan Strange, who had then about recovered from his concussion, but was still suffering with his arm. He began to pour out his troubles to his compatriot, complaining that while he was insensible the railway people had sold the débris of the freight wreck to a couple of peddlers, who had vanished, and with them seven bales of his rags. Then came the familar story about the linen-rag samples and the prospective San Francisco trade, which Jonathan now mourned as ruined.

"Strange," said Rolingston, "I know I am a fool, but I can't swallow that. What have you got in bale 91?"

Jonathan paused, and then answered hesitatingly, "Second-rate linen rags."

Rolingston sniffed, and reflected. On the station platform he had met Tom Virgil, a sheep-raiser, whose ranch was about three miles from his own. He had mentioned to Tom the sale of his old junk and learned that the peddlers were in negotiation for Virgil's whole wool clip, and had demonstrated their ability to pay several thousand dollars for it.

So the next day Rolingston drove Strange over to where the peddlers were camped, and he tackled them:

"I lost seven bales of rags in the wreck at Tie Siding," he said. "You bought them?"

"Yes."

"I would like to buy them back from you."

"My friend," said Nineveh, "the railway company vill pay you full value for your loss. Those damaged bales no goot to you now; ve keep them."

Strange tried a variation of the good old story about the samples and the danger of losing his trade, but the compassion of his auditors was not noticeably excited.

"Have you opened any of the bales?" he enquired, in desperation.

Nineveh looked at Jerusalem, who solemnly nodded.

Thus encouraged, Nineveh replied, "Yes, they vash fery goot rags; but ve found some grit in one bale."

Jonathan now swore, implored, threatened and cajoled by turns, and Nineveh was beginning to spit and become abusive, when Strange burst into a stream of Yiddish.

From that time on, Rolingston could only judge the conversation by the tones and gestures of the participants, but it was evident that the new medium of communication was having its effect. Jerusalem at once began to take an active part in the discussion, and Nineveh was soon almost as much a spectator as the rancher. Strange kept up the imploring tone for a while, Jerusalem shaking his head vigorously. Then the two ragmen stepped aside and held a consultation. Next, Jerusalem made a proposition to Strange, who hesitated and refused it. Another consultation, longer than the first; another proposition; a volley of questions from Strange, and then, evidently, agreement. The three men shook hands, and Rolingston drove Strange home to his ranch,

where his guest surprised him by announcing that he must start for England that very night. Pumping failed to elicit anything satisfactory.

"It is better for every one that you should not know what is up," he said. "But I shall not forget your kindness, and some day, when it will do no harm, I will tell you about bale 91."

Ten years later there came to the Wyoming rancher, through the hands of an English firm of solicitors a little package and a letter. As civilized man — and a rancher is partially civilized — looks to the written word to explain the unknown, Rolingston first read the letter, which ran thus:

DEAR SIR: — Pursuant to the instructions of our late client, Jonathan Strange, recently deceased, we forward to you by International Express Company, charges prepaid, a parcel to your address, and we enclose herewith a sealed letter relating to it. Hoping you will favour us with an acknowledgment of the receipt of the parcel and letter, we have the honour to remain, Your obedient servants,

JONES, WELSH & STRATTON.

The letter enclosed was from Strange himself, and was as follows:

As I promised you in 1888, I now take pen in hand, being about to execute my will and other important documents, to explain the occurrences about which I was unable to enlighten you at the time.

Finding that my rag business and other ventures was not going to make me a millionaire any too soon, I determined to have a little flutter with the United States Custom House. I raised £25,000, bought diamonds and packed 'em safe and sound in bale 91. Colquhoun of New York had promised me £35,000 for the parcel. How 91 went astray you know, and talk how I would I couldn't get the peddlers to shell out.

The Yiddish saved me. The beggars hung on to the stones, but offered to start me in rags and diamonds as a regular trade, and Good Lord, what a backing they had!

Since that I have been at it steady — diamonds, phenacetine and lots of other stuff — and never a Custom House officer poked his blessed nose into one of my odoriferous bales. But unluckily I did, and one of 'em had more bacilli to the square inch than a culture tube, and that's why I'm writing this. Wasn't it a beastly shame, when I was just getting enough together to retire at my ease? Well, the jig is up for me, but the small sample of my riches which you will get with this — duty paid, mind you — will look well, I'm sure on your Lucy's hand, and will serve as a reminder to you of a day I have never forgotten, for it was the one on which you set me face to face with Jerusalem and Nineveh.

Charles Rolingston found the sample of riches to be a fine, large cut diamond, of the rare and valuable blue-white color, in the centre of a package contrived in the outward semblance of a miniature bale of rags.

The Woman In Red.*

BY MURIEL CAMPBELL DYAR.

WINTER reigned throughout Europe, but on the Riviera spring and summer bloomed together. Overhead the sky was infinitely blue, below the sea was green and purple and amethyst. Everywhere the sun, everywhere the scent of geranium and mimosa, the fragrance of rose and violet. Always the deep boom, boom of the waves thundering against the tall cliffs of Monaco, always the cry of the sea gull, forever the chimes from the church of Sainte Dévote.

At Monte Carlo, that paradise of the gamester, the season was at its height. The Hôtels de Paris and Beau-Rivage were crowded, those of the quarter La Condamine were full, and well-dressed people, finding shelter in some cheap lodging house over in Monaco, gave the name of some more fashionable resort when applying for a *carte d'admission* to the "Cercle des Étrangeres," the euphemistic title of that institution which draws hither the avid and the inquisitive of all the nations. Day after day, night after night, the Casino overflowed with those who came to tempt Fortune. Every one laughed and sang and was gay. Heavy hearts are hidden at Monte Carlo.

It was at a concert that she first appeared — the Woman in Red. The French tenor was just beginning his number when the doors of the middle box of the right hand tier swung slowly open and closed behind her. She stood for just a moment outlined against the ivory background. Very tall she seemed, dressed from head to foot in red — not cardinal, nor crimson — but the most intense and glowing scarlet. From out this mass of color her bare throat rose vividly white, and down the satin of her skirt her ungloved arms hung, soft and round as those of a child. Her hair, too, fine and fair, gave her head a rather childish look.

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And then — no wonder fans stopped fluttering and silks began to rustle — her face was entirely concealed by a mask of dark red velvet!

The lady seated herself quickly, with a curious grace in every movement, and the red of her dress spreading out around her, stained as with blood the whiteness of the box. She raised her glass and insolently swept the house, moving her head so that the jewels in her hair blazed and flamed into the faces turned in her direction. A laugh floated from above as a woman in the gallery, with her programme twisted into a little roll, mocked the motion. The Woman in Red turned away her face with a shrug of her white shoulders, and sat through the performance quite still and indifferent. At the beginning of the last number she rose slowly, and gathering together her shimmering scarlet left the box. That was the introduction to the world of Monte Carlo of the Woman in Red.

After that, interest centered about her, increasing as her peculiarities became known. She never wore a suggestion of any color but red, and that alone was enough to make her conspicuous. Then the mask, thought to have been merely a caprice on the night of the concert, was never removed. That rendered her mysterious. She talked but little, going about silently, with a soft, light step. One might be quite alone, and the next moment suddenly aware of the Red Woman's presence. When the tall young Englishman who lost everything at a turn of the wheel went out into the Casino garden and, cocking his pistol in the shadow of the cacti, muttered, "I'll end the whole cursed business!" the Woman in Red murmured persuasively beside him, "Oh, I wouldn't—" and he didn't, and when a lady knelt one evening before the image of the Virgin in the church of Sainte Dévote, and whispered wildly, "O Blessed Mother, forgive me my sins!" it was the Woman in Red who finished softly for her, "and those who sin against me." This made her something more than conspicuous and mysterious — it made her awesome.

No one ever saw her smoke, but her scarlet garments always exhaled a faint odor of cigarettes. Every night she came into the roulette room and sat there in her scarlet dress, with a red flower in her hair, and put down her stakes with as much emotion as

though the gold and notes were worthless. Consistent in her color scheme, she invariably placed her money on the red, and nine times out of ten she won.

To make her a trifle more conspicuous, mysterious and eerie, she had for a chaperon a woman so thin and wrinkled and old as to seem hardly capable of life. When some one ventured to ask her a question about the Woman in Red the creature cackled, "Oh, the devil, the devil, the devil. How should I know?"

"No wonder the men like her," chattered a lively little Frenchwoman. "They'd like us if we muffled our faces and wore clothes like that. I'll wager she has the face of a *blanchisseuse* — any one could be fascinating behind a velvet mask!"

"She is, certainly," said a bystander, drily.

"*Peste!*" exclaimed the sallow critic angrily. "No one wants that old count or that stupid baron or that pink-cheeked English boy, anyway!"

It is true that the Woman in Red had found ardent admirers in the old count and the stupid baron and the English boy — the one to whom she had whispered that night behind the cacti — and the rivalry between them increased as the season passed. To-day one was in favor, to-morrow another, and the frequenters of the Casino got to betting on the chances of the several suitors till it became almost as exciting as a game at one of the tables.

But throughout it all the woman remained calm, inscrutable, mysterious. Neither of the three could persuade her to tell her name or take off her mask.

"I answer to any name," she said. "I have forgotten my own, and as for my face, what makes you think it beautiful?"

"Oh, *you*," said the courtly old count.

"Your hands," said the stupid baron.

"Your hair," said the blond young Englishman, with British egotism.

In answer to each she only laughed a hard little laugh, not altogether pleasant to hear.

To be much talked about and to say little appeared to suit her. A month after her advent no one in Monte Carlo or Monaco knew a whit more about her than at first, and no one would have hesitated to give half his fortune — had he had one — to know

everything. The mystery of the masked woman was exasperating — the theories concerning her innumerable. Perhaps the majority of the women believed that, being very ugly, she had adopted this means of attracting the attention rightfully belonging to beauty. She was a problem which might be studied for weeks without arriving at a solution.

The warm southern days crept lazily along, and as sometimes happens even in that sheltered paradise, began to grow oppressively hot. It was on the languid evening of one of these scorching days that the Woman in Red and the young Englishman were gaming side by side at the roulette table. The air of the Casino was heavy and scented, there was a murmur of laughter and talk, and the frequent click-clack of the roulette balls. The woman pushed back her chair impatiently and said to the man:

"Do come out into the garden — it is insufferably hot in here!"

"I should think," said the young man at length, as they strolled through the shrubbery, "that your mask would be unbearable!"

"It is."

"Then why not take it off?"

"I did not come out to talk of that."

"But perhaps I did!" The British shoulders squared themselves aggressively.

The woman made no reply, but continued her occupation of listlessly slipping a ring up and down her finger.

"Oh, I have dropped it!" she suddenly cried, and stooped quickly to search for it. The low branch of a tree caught in the coils of her yellow hair. To free it she impatiently drew up her head. There was a sharp click, as of the release of a metal catch, and the velvet mask, loosened, fell softly to the ground. She made an inarticulate noise in her throat, and her hands were thrown upward in an ineffectual attempt to conceal her face, but the young man was too quick for her. There, in the bright white moonlight, he looked full at the face of the Woman in Red and, with a terrible cry of horror, fell like one dead upon the grass.

It was a long time before he opened his eyes and felt the touch of the woman's hand upon his brow and the cool trickle of water over his face. He lay passive, thinking of nothing. Then suddenly it all came back.

"Oh, don't, don't, *don't* touch me!" he gasped. "Keep away from me!"

He staggered to his feet, and pressed his hands to his eyes to shut out the vision that would return. His knees trembled and his teeth chattered. Something as white as the moonlight gathered at his lips.

The woman made an imploring gesture. "Oh, see, I have put it on again," and she turned her head that he might behold the velvet mask.

At the sound of her voice he shivered in terror and, without a word, but making a strange moaning noise, he ran, like one demented, in the direction of the lighted Casino. And in the still, white moonlight the Woman in Red stood like one of the statues of the terraced garden, its marble purity turned to scarlet.

The next night she was at her usual place at the roulette table, but it was the stupid baron who sat beside her.

"Why don't you play?" he asked, as she sat motionless and indifferent, eyed curiously by the spectators of the game. She sat up wearily and pushed a pile of gold and notes upon the red, No. 12. The croupier started the wheel revolving rapidly in one direction and sent the ball deftly rolling in the other, and there was a little buzz of conversation. Tongues wagged briskly while eyes were fastened on the whirling wheel.

"What has become of our English friend?" asked one.

"Gone home," was the answer from another across the table. "Perhaps the heat went to his head!" He tapped his forehead significantly.

Gradually the wheel slowed down, and the ball was about to settle with its customary click. Gamblers leaned over the table to see the result of their bets. The slowly rolling sphere was just dropping into No. 12! No, it has settled into the adjoining compartment.

"*Vingt-huit, noir gagne!*" calls out the croupier with shrill monotony, and the shining heaps are distributed to the winners.

"And Madame has lost!" exclaimed the stupid baron, in surprise.

The Woman in Red made no reply, but stood up and, with an imperious motion not to follow, walked steadily from the *salle de*

jeu, a vivid bit of color under the glittering lights of the splendid apartment.

Early the next morning she was found lying on the marble steps of the Casino, dead in her scarlet dress. The stain trailing along the snowy marble had been scarlet, too, but was now turning to a reddish brown. In one fine, strong hand was tightly clutched a folded note. The servants and people who gathered in trembling awe sent for the priest of the church of Sainte Dévote to read it. He came quickly, panting a little for breath. Taking the paper from the fingers of the dead woman, he glanced over it nervously, while the people looked on in breathless silence. It was written in French.

"I will read it," the priest said slowly, and he translated the writing in trembling tones:

"'I have taken my own life — let that pass. Let no one lift the mask from my face but the priest of the church of Sainte Dévote, and I pray him, when he knows my secret, to say mass for my soul. By all that is holy, respect these words.'"

As his solemn voice ceased, those crowding about shuddered and fell back in nameless fear. They at once carried the body of the woman to where she had lodged, the early morning sun gleaming strangely on her scarlet garments and yellow hair. The priest entered the house and closed the door upon the crowd.

When he again emerged, he was hardly recognizable. His face, deadly white, twitched and quivered spasmodically, his eyes protruded and rolled wildly from side to side, and his lips were parted in an awful, unholy smile. His trembling hands could scarcely hold the crucifix. To those who spoke to him he made no answer — he did not seem to hear.

They buried the woman that evening at sunset, among the nameless graves on the hill behind Monte Carlo, as speedily as possible. When the grim, grotesque companion of the dead was asked if any one should be sent for, the only answer she would give was:

"Oh, the devil, the devil, the devil. How should I know?"

The priest from the church of Sainte Dévote mumbled the service rapidly and indistinctly over the grave, with one shaking hand raised in a defensive attitude, as though to banish something

or still the quaking terror that shook him from head to foot. When the ritual was ended he turned to the dense crowd which no secrecy or word of authority had been able to keep away, and said so sternly and distinctly that his voice echoed in the silence:

"Whosoever as much as dares to touch this grave, upon him I pronounce the everlasting curse of the Holy Church of Rome!"

Down the sloping hillside, back to the town he led the procession, all the way shaking like a leaf. When they came again to the narrow streets he suddenly stopped trembling and began to laugh, and at the sound of such laughter the people stumbled over each other in their anxiety to get away.

The Commissaire Spécial and the Administration acted promptly and with energy. There was an extra concert that very night, a grand ball on that succeeding, followed by a comic opera. At Monte Carlo it will not do to encourage reminiscence. And so, by and by, people stopped thinking, and began to talk of other things. The old count and the stupid baron were among the first to drop the subject. But when to the mad priest in his cell there came continually the deep boom, boom of the sea, the cry of the gull and the chimes of the church where he should never more say mass, he laughed, and laughed, and laughed — though he could not remember why!

The Invasion of Calmhaven.*

BY ARTHUR McEWEN.

DR. PHILIP GRUNSON was rowing on the smooth little river which on the south bounded the extensive wooded grounds of the private lunatic asylum where he served as assistant resident physician. Calmhaven called itself a sanitarium, but it was really a lunatic asylum, though it harbored among its inmates many patients who were not lunatics quite — only nervous wrecks or moral cripples seeking help in their despairing fight to conquer bad habits. The river was not navigable at this point, and being free from steamers and all craft save an occasional pleasure boat, had come to be regarded almost as a private stream by Calmhaven, of whose hotel-like buildings with their rocker-dotted verandas the young doctor caught a glimpse through the trees now and again as he pulled at his oars. To row on this sequestered river was the one relaxation of Dr. Grunson, who knew much about his profession and little about life. He had worked so very hard to acquire knowledge of medicine and surgery that, like numbers of young doctors, he was ignorant and grave beyond his years. Lectures and text-books and the hospitals leave little time for social attrition or that reading which brightens the mind, quickens the spirit and multiplies the sympathies. In his head was charted every bone and muscle belonging to the human body, but with the human heart, except as a physical organ, he had no conscious acquaintance. Busy men dream few dreams. His mother, his sister, older than himself, half a dozen industrious and absorbed female students, the trained nurses of the wards — these had given him all his association with women. Dr. Grunson was yet too young to have undergone atrophy of the imaginative and esthetic faculties — they were dormant merely. He was not stupid, despite his extreme gravity; simply

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his good brain had been exercised in a special direction and his capacity for sentiment not at all. Of marriage he had thought, of course, being a normal man, but as something far away, on the yonder side of the office and competence that were to be his in the years to come when he should take up private practice and succeed. That he would succeed he was quite sure, and he was justified in this confidence, for he owned a resolute temper and had no tastes or weaknesses to swerve him from the straight professional track. Meantime he tarried in this Calmhaven Jericho till his beard should be grown, and it was growing finely, doing its loyal best to give an aspect of trust-inspiring maturity to the soberly ambitious young man without means or friends of influence, who saved while he labored and studied in this asylum against the day of private practice. In the interval he qualified himself for a career as an alienist, should circumstances force him along that road. Already his book knowledge of insanity was larger and fresher than that of the superintendent himself, Dr. Witthaus, an elderly man who had grown rusty in madhouse literature, he preferring the human pages which the living cases in Calmhaven supplied. "Study the patients more and the books less," advised Dr. Witthaus; but his assistant was still in the book stage.

Dr. Grunson rowed on the quiet river and thought of paresis. His primary motive for rowing was his recognition of the need of exercise, his secondary the pleasure it afforded him, for Dr. Grunson was a healthy young man, well muscled and strong. He had need to be, for a practitioner among lunatics is often required to do more violent tasks than prescribe sedatives and enforce hygiene. The afternoon was warm and the oarsman had shed his coat. He pulled with a steady stroke, the rhythm of which made muscular music for him. Behind him, as far as the eye could reach, to a bend a mile away, his was the only boat visible on the placid stream which mirrored prettily the willows and maples on its grassy banks. He filled his lungs deeply, knowing that that was good for him, and his thoughts switched from paresis to acute mania.

Suddenly Dr. Grunson backed water with startled energy and stared in astonishment.

No wonder. A girl lay in the water not two oars' length from

the boat. She was not dead. Had she been, this steady-nerved young doctor would not have been disturbed a hundredth part so greatly as he was. Dead people were very much in his line, whereas living girls, on land or water, were not. This one was exceedingly alive, as it proved.

She lay on her back, keeping afloat with slight motions of her hands by her sides — a practised swimmer evidently — and gazed solemnly at the man who stared at her, speechless. They were strange eyes, hazel and very large, their look intense. She was not more than twenty, apparently, of small and rather full figure, and her pale face, Dr. Grunson decided, or something in Dr. Grunson decided for him, was almost lovely. It would have been wholly so but for the eyes. These were beautiful in themselves, but their intensity of regard gave them an uncanny quality, the hypnotic quality which confuses the sight of others and causes a sense of dizzy disturbance in the brain.

"Who are you, m'sieu'?" she demanded, calm but frowning.

Her voice helped Dr. Grunson to find his.

"And who are you, Miss? And what on earth are you doing out here in the water?" he asked.

There was to be no end to Dr. Grunson's surprises. The instant these words left his lips she whirled around upon her chest and with three strokes reached the boat, seizing which she drew herself up until her chin was above the line of the stern. A diamond twinkling on her little finger threw its rays into his puzzled eyes. Her face showed anger, and a naturally sweet contralto was depraved into harsh flatness as she cried out at him:

"Insolent! *You* dare to question *me!* What do you do in our park? Canaille! you shall be punished. Row me," she ordered, boarding the skiff with an athletic ease which the young doctor appreciated in spite of his bewilderment, "row me instantly to the bank and I shall deliver you to our foresters."

"Why, certainly, Miss," quietly assented Dr. Grunson. This talk of park and foresters revealed everything to him, and he became at once his collected professional self. "Where did you leave your wheel?"

She was in bicyclist's dress, of the lightest material and with the shortest of skirts.

"In a dell by the shore of this lake," she answered mildly, and as he set himself to the oars, eyeing her the while furtively, she caught his glance and her young face rippled into a sunny smile.

"Faster, Louis," she urged gently. "We have been upon the water long enough. The dew is falling, I think. Yes," — while she felt her clinging garments with a questioning hand — "I am sure it is, for I am damp."

The memory of that walk of a few hundred yards to the asylum always remained with Dr. Grunson. He laughs at it now, but it was a tremendously serious business then. It began with the wet girl's small hand upon his arm, her face upturned to his, beaming with trust and a sisterly tenderness. There was an imploring cadence in her voice while she spoke, rapidly and at length. But, as she spoke in French, Philip understood not one word, though he pretended comprehension, and was deadly anxious to deliver her into the matron's care before some change of lunatic mood might seize her. From French she burst into English, perfectly good American English, and then dropped back into French again. Try as he might she would not let him hurry. She addressed him as, "Louis, mon cousin," which was near enough in sound to English to be comprehended. At a turn of the wide, blue-graveled path, that, when rounded, would bring into view the buildings of Calmhaven, she stopped where a venerable elm cast its luminous shade, the sunlight sifting down through the foliage and giving to the air that sylvan sweetness of pervasive green which is the most delicate thing in nature.

"Louis," she besought him, both her hands upon his arm, "you will speak to the Cardinal for me and Eugéne, won't you, dear? He esteems you, and you are powerful."

"Certainly, certainly," Philip assured her in encouraging tones, the tones of the soothing doctor.

"It means so much," she urged plaintively, clinging closer to him, "so much for Eugéne, so much for me. We cannot live apart. Eugéne is poor, but he is noble — bear that in upon the Cardinal — Eugéne is noble. Are not the D'Estemauvilles the equals in blood of the De Rohans? Does not all the world know that?"

"Of course," agreed Philip, warmly, "of course; that's understood everywhere."

And he smiled upon her with a wide, professional smile that was not seconded by his anxious eyes.

"And yet, and yet," she said, her voice breaking, "while the Cardinal, our uncle, objects, Louis, the King will forbid."

She withdrew herself from him, sat down dejectedly on a great gray boulder under the elm, and covering her face with her hands began to weep — not with violence, but in pitiful, quiet helplessness.

Dr. Grunson stood in the road regarding her with the patience of his training. She certainly was very pretty to look at. Being young, Philip, though a doctor and a budding alienist, couldn't be blind to that. The scant wet dress set off her well-rounded, girlish figure to perfection. Her hair, loosened at the sides, fell from under the half-displaced jaunty cap to her shoulders in wavy, dark cascades. She was so pathetically small, so utterly feminine in her helpless woe, that a gush of protecting pity surged through Philip's breast.

"Won't you," he said gently, approaching and touching her shoulder, "won't you please get up and come with me?"

She raised her face from her hands, smiling tearfully through her hair, and sprang to her feet.

"Surely," she cried gayly. "Let us to the chateau, M. le Comte. Luncheon must be ready."

With her hand on his arm again and chattering in French with a sustained volubility whose only interruptions were her frequent bursts of light laughter, she completed the journey to Calmhaven.

"Thank God!" sighed Dr. Grunson, when he had landed her in the asylum and the matron's charge. "Thank God!"

Then he changed his clothes, for the side to which this new patient had clung was wet to the skin.

. . . . . .

Dr. Witthaus was not at all sorry when, at the end of a week, the new patient disappeared, her wheel with her. In the first place, Calmhaven was intended for people of means, and though the young woman was plainly not a poor person she had brought no money with her, and efforts to discover her identity had failed. Besides, to this elderly alienist, insensible to the charms of youth, demented or undemented, she had been a good deal of a nuisance.

Mademoiselle de Rohan, as she called herself, roved all over the place, where great liberty was allowed, talking of cardinals and dukes, the King and Versailles, singing in French one hour and bewailing her lovelorn lot in English the next. She flew into a passion with Dr. Grunson because he did not instantly, upon her demand, furnish her with a lute.

That young man was not so philosophical as his superior. The thought of the poor girl, insane, and singularly attractive despite her insanity, wandering about without protection, harassed him into nervous and febrile excitement by day and produced stubborn insomnia by night.

"My dear Grunson," protested the seasoned Dr. Witthaus, on the third day, "if you persist in making a personal concern of it, and going off like a belated knight-errant in search of this crazy damsel, I shall certainly think you need treatment yourself. When you are older, my boy, you will learn to keep your feelings for those who are entitled to them and take only a professional interest in your patients. This girl is nothing to you, nothing to us. No doubt we shall hear of her soon. So well-marked a case of mania, accompanied by hallucination, cannot be long hid."

They did hear from her, Dr. Witthaus with well-founded indignation, and Dr. Grunson with a deep sense of having the most delicate sensibilities of his nature trampled upon. The letter came to the latter. It begged his pardon, and then continued:

But business is business with me as well as with yourself and that astute owl of an eminent alienist, our mutual hard-hearted friend, Dr. Witthaus. Really, my dear Dr. Grunson, were it not out of gratefulness to you, who were so kind, so manly in your consideration, I would try what I could do to make Calmhaven a little less profitable than it is. While it is true that the stories of cruelty and neglect which came to the "Searchlight" office are, so far as I could discover, wholly unfounded, there is always enough about any large institution of the kind to supply material for a critical pen. But for your sake, in return for the pranks I played upon you in the way of business, and your truly noble care for what you took to be a deranged and helpless girl, I have disappointed the editor by reporting to him that Calmhaven is all right and that there's nothing there worth space in the "Searchlight," which wants only the sensational. I enclose my check for my week's entertainment, and should you care when in New York to call I shall be very glad indeed to meet you again.

Sincerely, and a little remorsefully, yours,

HELEN BEATTY ("Dottie Dimple").

Dr. Witthaus's hair rose, rose above his indignation as a fooled and flouted specialist of national reputation. For a whole week Calmhaven had harbored "Dottie Dimple," the famous female reporter. He turned white. The name of that enterprising young lady must forever henceforth give him the sensations that the name of Guy Fawkes imparted to members of the British Parliament for several generations.

. . . . . .

The sign of Dr. Philip Grunson embellishes the door of a brownstone house in a conspicuously respectable up-town New York street at the present day. His beard is all that he could wish, and the dark green livery of his coachman is just what it should be.

Notwithstanding his resolve never to pardon such heartless deceit, Dr. Grunson did call on Miss Helen Beatty. And he continued to call. It was on the occasion of his thirtieth — or was it the fiftieth? — visit, one year and eight months precisely after the young lady's departure from Calmhaven, that a conversation took place in Miss Helen's elegant flat on 51st Street, West, in which that persuasive journalist — who had a bank account — overcame the doctor's scruples on the subject of ways and means, and outlined their immediate future in these words:

"Domesticity is really my dearest ideal, Philip. I detest 'Dottie Dimple' and all her works. I've thought everything out, and we shall be married immediately — say on the first Wednesday in June. It is now April 18th. I am due to go up in a balloon on May 2d, and that shall be my last assignment."

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